UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, LONDON.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

OF

THE MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE,

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 1857.

LORD BROUGHAM, PRESIDENT,

AND AT THE CLOSE OF THE PROCEEDINGS,

ROBERT HUTTON, ESQ., F.G.S.,

IN THE CHAIR.

A Requisition as follows, signed by Twenty-one Members of the College, was read:—

"We, the undersigned Members of University College, London, request that a SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COLLEGE may be called for the purpose of considering what steps, if any, ought to be taken with reference to certain apprehended alterations in the constitution of the University of London intended to dispense with the necessity of Candidates for Degrees in Arts and Laws having been educated in an Institution affiliated to the University."

Mr. Martineau moved, That it be Resolved,—

"That this meeting, regarding with great satisfaction the intention of the Government to grant to the University of London a new Charter which will incorporate the Graduates, but understanding that the Senate propose that collegiate education shall no longer be necessary for Candidates for Degrees in Arts and Laws, desires to express its disapproval of the proposed change, as one likely to be injurious to the cause of regular and systematic education, and as not only lowering the value, but altering the very meaning, of an English University Degree."

Mr. George Jessel, M.A., Fellow of the College, seconded the motion.

Mr. Grote moved as an amendment, that the word "regards" be substi-

tuted for "regarding" in the first line; and that all the words after the word "Graduates" be omitted. Professor Williamson seconded the motion.

Question put—For the Amendment 2,—against it 56.

The original motion put, and passed in the affirmative.

Mr. Taylor, Treasurer, moved, That it be Resolved,—

"That University College having been pointed out in 1835 by the Address of the House of Commons to the Crown as the future University of London, and having cheerfully waived its claims to that high dignity, in order to promote the public welfare, has a peculiar right to object to a change which will destroy the essential character of that University constitution, on the faith of which it consented to surrender its position."

Mr. W. Fowler, LL.B., Fellow of the College, seconded the motion. Question put and passed in the affirmative; one dissentient.

On the motion of Mr. Osler, LL.B., Fellow of the College, seconded by Mr. James Yates,—Resolved,

"That the Council of University College be requested to communicate with the Senate of the University of London, and with the Home Office, and to take such steps as will, in their opinion, give the greatest weight to the views of the meeting, as expressed in the above resolutions."

On the motion of Mr. Yates, Resolved unanimously,—

"That the hearty thanks of the meeting be presented to Lord Brougham for his kindness in presiding this day, for the interest which he has at all times taken in the welfare of the College, and for his conduct in the Chair."

On the motion of Mr. Taylor, Resolved,—

"That the hearty thanks of the meeting be returned to Earl Fortescue, for his attendance this day, and for the constant interest which he has shown for the welfare of the College."

Adjourned.

CHARLES C. ATKINSON,
Secretary.

OBSERVATIONS

By the Council of University College

on the Medical Reform Bills before Parliament, 1857.

Submitted to Her Majesty's Government 4th July.*

The Council have considered the Bills brought in, No. 1 by Mr. Headlam, No. 3 by Lord Elcho, each entitled "A Bill to alter and amend the Laws regulating the Medical Profession."

They have also perused the Memorial which the Senate of the University of London have submitted to the Government on the subject of the same Bills.

The Council agree in the comments contained in that Memorial, and in the preference which is given in it to the Bill of Lord Elcho. They deem it unnecessary to repeat opinions and objections which they share with the Senate of the University, and which appear to be sufficiently enforced by that body; but they find some points of importance unnoticed in the Memorial; and there are objections to the Bill of Mr. Headlam which require to be more particularly insisted on. They beg leave, therefore, to offer the following observations.

With regard to the General education which both Bills require for all persons who shall in future enter the Medical Profession, the Council are of opinion that by the establishment of a preliminary test of General Education the profession will be much raised in the estimation of the public, and Students will be better fitted to profit by the course marked out for their professional instruction.

The Council concur with the Senate of the University of London, and for the reasons assigned by that body (p. 10), in the preference given to the scheme for testing Preliminary Education contained in Lord Elcho's Bill.

For the Professional Examinations, the Examiners, under Mr. Headlam's Bill, would be appointed exclusively by the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons and the Society of Apothecaries. The addition of Examiners nominated by the Universities is contemplated by Lord Elcho's Bill; and this appears to be much preferable.

Mr. Headlam's Bill further requires that the Examiners shall be chosen from among registered Medical men; but if the bodies entrusted with the selection are deemed competent for that duty, it seems altogether inexpedient to restrict their range of choice. Indeed it is obvious that this restriction would injuriously interfere with the selection of Examiners in certain departments—Chemistry and Botany, for example—since the persons most fit to be such examiners will probably not be registered Medical men. Lord Elcho's Bill leaves it open to choose Examiners wherever the fittest may be found, and in this respect is decidedly superior.

* *Vide* Report, p. 11.

Again, by Mr. Headlam's Bill, Surgeons, *i.e.* General Practitioners, will *in England* have to pass four distinct examinations—namely, 1. in Medicine, before a Board constituted by the College of Physicians and Society of Apothecaries; 2. in Surgery, before the Court of Examiners of the College of Surgeons of England; 3. in Midwifery, before a Board of Examiners nominated by the College of Physicians, College of Surgeons, and Society of Apothecaries; and, 4. in Surgery *again*, by the College of Surgeons (§ xxii. l. 17–21). In *Scotland and in Ireland* it is provided that the several Boards of Examiners may act conjointly as a single Board. This is a manifest advantage, and there seems no *public* reason why it should not be extended to England. Certain subjects of examination are common to both Medicine and Surgery; but by the scheme contemplated for London, the Candidate must, *or at least may*, be subjected to examination on these subjects, first by one Board, and then by another—a proceeding which, though it may suit the convenience, and secure the acquiescence, of particular corporations, would be harassing and vexatious to future entrants into the Medical Profession, and calculated to perpetuate one of the principal evils which the promoters of the Bill profess to remedy.

Moreover the proposed London scheme of examination would seriously stand in the way of any well-ordered plan by which Candidates should be enabled to go through the different subjects of the professional examination at successive stages in the progress of their education, instead of deferring the whole to a final examination. The plan of dividing the examination into two sections—an earlier, and a later or more advanced one—to be passed through at successive periods in the curriculum of Medical study, has already been adopted by the Universities of London and Edinburgh; and after what may be considered an adequate trial has met with general approval: and it is submitted that it would be highly impolitic to impose, by positive legislative enactment, conditions which might operate as a bar to this or similar improvements which the Medical Council might deem it expedient to introduce.

There is a marked difference in the effects which the two Bills would have on the interests of University graduates. By Lord Elcho's Bill, the Graduate having been examined by a fairly constituted body, would be styled a "Licentiate in Medicine and Surgery," and would be entitled to engage in different branches of Medical Practice in any part of the United Kingdom, as well as legally to claim insertion in an authorized register of Medical men, without further payment; whereas under Mr. Headlam's Bill, a Graduate before registration as a Physician would be required to join a College of Physicians after an examination by such College, and payment of a fee.

The Council deem it incumbent on them to repeat the objection made by them last year to any provision constraining a Medical Practitioner to become a Member of a College, and to pay additional fees; and they again submit that the enforcement of such a condition would be matter of just grievance to University Graduates, who, like those of the University of London, have been already subjected to a full and strict examination. In

that University the Examination comprehends every branch of Medical Science and Practice; it is conducted not only by means of written papers and oral interrogation, but by practical exercises of various kinds, including the investigation by the candidate of the cases of actual patients. A further examination in such circumstances could only be felt as superfluous and vexatious. Moreover, it would often come to be enforced at a most unseasonable period in the career of a Medical Practitioner; for many well-educated young men, after taking a degree, begin professional life as general practitioners, and having gained experience and reputation, as well as professional connexion, in that capacity, subsequently take to practising as Physicians—a course followed by some who have attained the highest eminence. By Mr. Headlam's Bill a person so circumstanced would be called on to go through an examination which might prove embarrassing to one who had some time left College, and, at any rate, humiliating to an established practitioner. The same observation will apply to the case of Graduates who enter as Surgeons the Medical service of the Army, Navy, or East India Company, and afterwards settle in civil practice as Physicians.

By a recent Act of the Legislature, the Graduates of the University of London are, equally with those of Oxford and Cambridge, entitled to practise as Physicians in all parts of England and Wales, except the Metropolis; but if the present Bill should become Law, a question might arise whether they retain the right so bestowed. At the same time the Council have no desire to see conferred on Universities in general the uncontrolled authority to grant licenses to their Graduates to practise as Physicians; nor do they desire to secure special immunities to the University of London in particular: and accordingly they entirely approve of a common examination as provided by Lord Elcho's Bill, which all must pass on entering the Medical Profession, but which, being once passed, confers freedom to practise any branch of that profession without future trammels.

It may be reckoned that this examination would usually precede the examination at a University; but a Degree being evidence to the public of higher attainment, its possession would be an object of honourable ambition even among those intending to become general practitioners; and especially when it was known that in the event of their afterwards engaging in practice as Physicians, the Degree would be available without *compulsory* examination by, and enrolment in, a College. In this way, Lord Elcho's Bill, if passed into law, would tend directly to improve education throughout the general body of the Profession; whilst Mr. Headlam's, by establishing two different Registers, with a different process of admission to each, compelling medical men to make their election between them at the outset of life, and imposing obstacles to the transition from one to the other at any future period, would have the effect of discouraging any desire for higher qualification and more extended professional education, which might arise in anticipation of future advancement.

A comparison of the expense of obtaining the requisite licenses and registration under the one or the other Bill will be found to be in favour of that of Lord Elcho. By this Bill the privileges which it would confer,

including the registration of the qualification or qualifications for practising the Medical Profession, will be obtained after payments, which it is provided shall not exceed, in some cases twenty-five, in others thirty pounds. By the Bill of Mr. Headlam, in addition to fees for examination and registration, further payments to be fixed by the respective corporations will have to be made for enrolment. The expense of admission to the Fellowship of the College of Physicians is £111 18*s*.—a sum which exceeds considerably the entire cost to Students of their professional education.

The Council cannot avoid remarking, in conclusion, that while Mr. Headlam's Bill is, for obvious reasons, calculated to conciliate the present *Governing Bodies* of various Medical Corporations, it leaves greatly out of view the interests of those who are in all future time to constitute the great body of the Medical Profession.

By the Council, 20th June, 1857.

"Resolved unanimously,—That the 'Observations' (on the Medical Reform Bills) be adopted as a Memorial to the Government.

"That a Deputation be appointed to represent the views of the Council to the First Lord of the Treasury before the second reading of the Bills, and to submit to him the Memorial.

"That Lord Brougham, President, the Earl Fortescue, Vice-President, Lord Belper, Dr. Boott, Mr. Grote, Dr. Mackenzie, Mr. Thornely, and Mr. F. Wood be the Deputation from the Council. That Professor Jenner, M.D., Dean, and Professor Ellis, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and Professor Sharpey, M.D., be requested to join the Deputation, with such other Members of the Faculty of Medicine of the College as may be able to attend.

FORTESCUE, V.P.,
Chairman."